

March 5, 1962

Mrs. R. Sargent Shriver
Edson Lane
Rockville, Maryland

Dear Mrs. Shriver:

I note your communication to Governor Brown relative to my designation as a California representative on European travel relative to the observation of methods in mental retardation.

As I have already discussed with Dr. Kety I have already made other commitments of long standing to visit Japan for an extensive tour of lectures and laboratory consultations in biochemical genetics this Spring. I will certainly be attentive to good work in neuro-biochemistry that is being conducted in Japan and in fact I already have two addresses where I might consider the recruitment of research personnel for our own program in this area. However as I already have a fairly full schedule and specific obligations to my present hosts, I would prefer to conduct my observations on a strictly informal basis and not as a formal representative of the President's Panel which might entail additional obligations of a social as well as scientific character. In the light of the rest of my schedule I could probably accomplish more of substance by relying on already established contacts of an informal but scientific nature to arrange for useful appointments.

Much good work in neuro-biochemistry is going on in Europe at the present time, especially in Great Britain, but I believe the usual channels of scientific interchange, supplemented by occasional personal visits of an informal nature, are adequate to handle the scientific issues. In addition a number of international symposia are forthcoming or can be planned. The situation may well be quite different in regard to services where intensive close-up observation of a working system may be relatively far more valuable than conversational interchange of scientific conclusions.

I would therefore ask that you not press my designation for this activity at the present time.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL:pg

Shriver